



FEMA

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS BULLETIN

Week of September 8, 2014
Important Dates and Deadlines:

[Hazard Mitigation Assistance Unified Guidance](#)
(September 16, 2014)

[National PrepareAthon! Day](#)
(September 30, 2014)

FEMA Announces Statewide Test of Multiple Communication Pathways in West Virginia

As part of FEMA's mission to strengthen preparedness and resiliency, FEMA is working together with West Virginia emergency managers, the West Virginia Broadcasters Association and others to conduct a statewide test of the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS). The test, expected to last approximately two minutes, is scheduled for **Wednesday, September 17, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. EDT.**

The statewide test will verify the delivery of emergency alerts and assess the readiness of multiple communication pathways integrated into one public alert and warning system including: the Emergency Alert System (EAS), Wireless Emergency Alerts (WEAs), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) All-Hazards Weather Radio, and unique alerting systems that redistribute alerts through real-time postings on the internet through Facebook, Twitter, digital signs and specialized applications. Devices that serve people with access and functional needs are also able to pick up the redistributed alert messages through this unique alerting system.

The test is a cooperative effort to ensure that communication channels are available, working and ready to deliver alerts and warnings if an emergency occurs in West Virginia. Data collected from the statewide test, including information on distribution networks, monitoring assignments, transmission issues, public reaction and lessons learned, will be used to finalize plans for a national test of IPAWS.

The test in West Virginia is designed to occur during the state's regular monthly EAS test conducted by local broadcasters. WEA test messages will not disrupt or delay cell phone service. The test will only be received by field observers whose cell phones are programmed with special access codes.

In 2006, FEMA modernized the nation's alert and warning system by integrating new technologies into the existing alert system. The system, known to public safety officials as IPAWS, adopted new standards and protocols that enable emergency management professionals to send the same alert and warning message over multiple communication pathways at the same time, helping to save lives. Periodic testing of the IPAWS's integrated infrastructure is a way to ensure these systems are available to serve the public in times of emergency.

For more information on IPAWS or to learn about WEAs, please visit www.fema.gov/ipaws or www.ready.gov/alerts.

"Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Evacuation Planning and Response" Webinar

FEMA's Office of Disability Integration and Coordination along with the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services will present [a webinar](#) titled "Integrating Access and Functional Needs into Evacuation Planning and Response" on **September 15 from 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. EDT.**

This webinar will introduce participants to emergency evacuation and transportation planning inclusive of the needs of individuals with access and functional needs. The webinar is [available online](#). [Captioning is provided.](#)

FEMA's Office of External Affairs provides this bulletin to highlight recent and upcoming program and policy activities and announcements. Feedback is welcome at fema-qa-bulletin@fema.dhs.gov. Previous editions are available at the [FEMA library](#).

Open Joint Field Offices

AK, IA, MN, ND, NE,
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[Learn more.](#)

National Preparedness Month: Be Ready Before Disaster Strikes

"Disasters can strike at any time, and often with little notice. Last year, we witnessed the Boston Marathon bombing and the chemical plant explosion in my home state of Texas. Citizens around the country have also experienced hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires and floods. **We know that planning to be ready before a disaster strikes saves lives.** As Chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, I once again urge individuals and families to take steps this month to enhance their preparedness."

Rep. Michael McCaul, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security

National Preparedness Month: Did You Know?

- Fifty percent of American have not discussed or developed an emergency plan for family members about where to go and what to do in the event of a local disaster, according to a 2014 national survey conducted by FEMA.
- Only 19 percent of Americans claim to be very prepared for an emergency situation.
- Despite the devastation hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires and other emergencies and disasters have caused in recent years, only 60 percent of Americans say preparation for natural disasters is very important to them.

Learn more at www.ready.gov/september.

This bulletin is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of policies that are open for public comment, nor does it describe all of the instructions or requirements necessary to submit a comment. For a complete list of instructions and deadlines please click the hyperlinks included. FEMA does not endorse any non-government organizations, entities or services.

Ready Campaign Releases New Public Service Announcements

On September 5, the New York City Office of Emergency Management Commissioner Joseph Esposito and FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate kicked off National Preparedness Month and launched new Public Service Announcements (PSAs) that encourage families to take action to be prepared and make an emergency plan. Created in partnership with the Ad Council and pro bono by New York-based ad agency Deutsch, the new series of ads are available for television, radio and outdoor/print.

Earthquake Risk Reduction Tips

The recent August 24 magnitude 6.0 earthquake south of Napa, California, demonstrated that there are certain types of buildings, and certain types of components within buildings, that are at significantly higher seismic risk than other types of building types. While the Napa earthquake caused significant damage and a number of injuries, the building codes in California resulted in good building performance overall in areas where the highest shaking occurred.



The Ready print PSAs in Times Square.

The buildings that suffered the most damage were unreinforced masonry buildings (URMs). URMs are older buildings constructed of brick or concrete block exterior walls with little or no steel reinforcing to prevent excessive movement during earthquake shaking. This type of construction is very hazardous in an earthquake and URMs should be seismically retrofitted, especially if they have already been damaged and are in need of repair.

One of the most critical injuries reported following the Napa earthquake was to a child from a collapsing fireplace. It is common during an earthquake for fireplaces, and masonry chimneys in particular, to collapse, so mitigating this risk before an earthquake can be very effective. Masonry chimneys can be braced or replaced with a light weight metal flue chimney.

Manufactured housing also suffered in the Napa earthquake. Normally, manufactured housing is not adequately anchored to their foundation, or their foundation is dry stacked concrete block and do not resist earthquake ground motions. Once a unit falls off its foundation, its natural gas supply line can rupture, resulting in fires.

There are numerous documents available in the FEMA Library on how to reduce earthquake risk and mitigate hazards, including publications about [reducing building nonstructural hazards](#), [taking steps to reduce URM risk](#), [bracing chimneys for seismic impact](#) and [protecting manufactured homes from seismic hazards](#). A full listing of publications can be found at www.fema.gov/earthquake.

REMINDER: Update to the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Unified Guidance

FEMA is updating the current Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) Unified Guidance (published July 12, 2013). This guidance document provides an interpretation of general program requirements for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance Program per applicable statutes and regulations. Additionally, this document provides HMA project specific guidance in its addendum.

Please visit the [FEMA Library](#) to access the current HMA Guidance and the comment tracker. Responses may be submitted to the comment tracker by **September 16, 2014**, at hmaguidance@fema.dhs.gov to facilitate the anticipated release of the updated HMA Unified Guidance by the Spring of 2015.

The mission of the Office of External Affairs (OEA) is to engage, inform, and educate all of FEMA's stakeholders in support of the Agency's programs and initiatives to achieve its mission. OEA accomplishes its mission by coordinating and maintaining visibility of public and internal communications; advising FEMA program and support offices on decision-making regarding policies, plans, and actions that affect stakeholder, media, and Congressional audiences; and organizing outreach efforts targeted at principal stakeholders to include local, state, territorial, and tribal governments, the private sector, national organizations and associations, and the American public.



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Special Spotlight: National Preparedness Month and America's PrepareAthon!

National PrepareAthon! Day: September 30

Register to participate at www.ready.gov/prepare

September is [National Preparedness Month \(NPM\)](#). All across the country, federal, state, local and tribal governments, community organizations, and members of the private sector have embraced NPM and America's PrepareAthon! by planning events that will help their community to be more prepared in the event of a wildfire, hurricane, tornado, flood, earthquake or winter storm.

There is still time to plan or participate in an event in your area before the **National PrepareAthon! Day on September 30**. Below are some events happening throughout the country in September. For more information, visit www.ready.gov/prepare.

Across the Country

The Greater Fairmont Council of Churches in **Fairmont, West Virginia**, will host a Whole Community Preparedness Expo with multiple governmental, public and private sector entities as well as community based organizations on **September 27**. Experts will have exhibits on 72-hour preparedness kits, water purification/filtration, water and food storage, emergency first aid/CPR awareness, pet preparedness, auxiliary power and communications.

The **Utah Office of Emergency Management** will host the Utah Prepare Conference and Expo on **September 27**, a one-day conference for local emergency managers. *Be Ready Utah* and the Utah Citizen Corps program will host a booth at the expo and engage attendees in signing up for emergency notifications, downloading the [FEMA app](#), and filling out family communications plans, as well promoting the campaign to local leaders.

Madison County, Tennessee, will conduct a county-wide tornado drill, which will include the city of Jackson, on **September 30**. Local Community Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) will participate and assist.

Colorado State University will release the findings of their two-year state childcare center preparedness study and host a workshop for childcare center owners/managers and emergency managers on **October 2**.

Manhattan, Kansas, is in the process of officially declaring September and October 2014 "Manhattan's PrepareAthon!" Kansas State University is presenting a proclamation to the City Council of Manhattan the week of **October 6**. Riley County Emergency Management will partner with FEMA Region VII to conduct a *Download a Preparedness App Day* at select local schools as part of their Safety Week initiative.

In the Private Sector

Duracell is sponsoring an event in **New York City's Battery Park** on **September 30** to share preparedness and resiliency messages, as well as showcase their fleet of [Power Forward](#) trucks.

Agility Recovery is hosting a [series of weekly webinars](#) with the **U.S. Small Business Administration** throughout the month of September. Topics will help business owners take charge of their own wellbeing with [preparedness planning](#).

Walmart is airing the Ready Campaign's "Emergency Preparedness – Wireless Alerts" public service announcements (PSAs) at stores with checkout TVs. They are also airing ESPN and Ad Council's "Be a Hero" PSA on Walmart's internal website.

Google created a [Google Tips webpage](#) that demonstrates ways technology can help during a disaster, including information to download the [FEMA mobile app](#).



FEMA Administrator Craig Fugate at the National Preparedness Month event in New York City on September 5.